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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Wednesday, August 20, 1930

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Housekeeper's Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "The School Child's Allowance." Information approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. D. A. Also menu for children. (Omit recipe if program is too long.)

Bulletin available: "Lamb As You Like It."

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The other day I asked Aleen's mother to tell me what she does about Aleen's pocket money. Aleen is older than Billy, and has to have a school allowance for lunches, bus fares, and supplies, as well as her own spending money.

"Do you pay her for doing certain tasks at home?" was the first thing I wanted to know.

"No," said Aleen's mother, "Aleen's pocket money has nothing to do with everyday tasks done to help me. Training in handling money is a necessary part of her education, and training in family cooperation is entirely separate and equally necessary. The minute you begin to mix the two, or make one dependent on the other, the child is confused. And unfair situations inevitably arise, as when a parent takes a child shopping and uses up work time, or withholds promised spending money as a punishment.

"It has seemed better to me always to expect a certain amount of household assistance from each of my children. They have learned that we create work by merely living from day to day, and that we must each shoulder a fair share of this work. The amount of help any member of the household can give varies in many ways, and for causes that cannot always be controlled.

"To begin with, it depends on their age and capacity; it depends on how long I want them playing out of doors in the sunshine rather than indoors helping; it depends, as they get older, on the home studying required, the errands they are asked to do, and many other factors.

"On the other hand, if we want our children to learn to use money intelligently, we have to give them some to use. It doesn't train them in any way, merely to hand over the necessary amounts for school needs. They cannot make decisions about purchases that must be made in just a certain way, where there's no choice in the matter. Spending money may be very little at first, but it should be the child's very own.

"Of course Aleen and every other child makes mistakes in using money at times. But we all learn through our mistakes, that is, if we're smart."

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"What would you do," I asked, "if Aleen was naughty and failed to do some of her rightful home tasks, like making her bed or wiping the dishes? Would you keep back her pocket money? Or give it to her just the same? Or have fines for unfinished work?"

"I would never use spending money as a means of discipline," said Aleen's mother, firmly. I would find some other way of punishing or encouraging Aleen to do what she ought to do. As a matter of fact, such a question hardly ever arises, because we all cooperate so well in our home. A task not done may require apology and a promise, but seldom any discipline. Certainly not a money fine."

"How and when did you start Aleen with her first allowance?" I asked.

"We began with an envelope system when she was five years old," said Aleen's mother. "The same plan the social service workers use with the families they are helping to live on a budget plan.

"I got a package of small strong manila envelopes. Every Monday morning Aleen received two of these. One was marked 'To spend' and contained three cents. The other was marked 'To save for something nice', and contained two cents. The savings grew into a dime, and were exchanged for a package of crayons. A big ball was the next thing saved for. As soon as Aleen found out she could get things by saving, she put all the spending money into the saving envelope until she had what she wanted. That, of course, was just what I wanted her to learn'

"When she could do a little arithmetic and write legibly we changed to a purse and an account book. We ruled off columns, adding 'School Supplies to Personal or Spending and Saving, and increased the allowance accordingly. We now have more columns, Lunches, and Carfares, as those are expenses she cannot avoid.

"When she is eleven she will be old enough to have a yearly clothes allowance, and learn to keep within it. She has already reached the stage which her father calls 'Gimme' and 'Kinigo' (Can I go?). That means that she starts wanting whatever she sees other girls wearing, or is eager to go to all the movies and other places they talk about. With an allowance, she has learned to decide for herself what she can do.

"Having a budget made a lot of difference to Aleen's older sister--it encouraged her to learn to sew, so as to cut down the cost of her dresses. And it helped teach her good and poor values in everything she bought."

"This is certainly an age of progress," I remarked. "I can remember my mother's saying that when she was a little girl, if she ventured to ask the price of anything she was immediately told, 'Ninepence'. That of course was just another way of saying 'Children should not ask impertinent questions.' Now, you are actually showing your children the prices for everything, and teaching them how to buy wisely. It's a lot better."



"I think I first became interested in training my children in the use of money after a visit to my sister," said Aleen's mother. "I happened to see her so-called account book, and about every fifth item was H.O.K., in capital letters."

"What's this H.O.K. you buy so often?" I inquired.

"Heaven Only Knows," my sister said--"I can't remember." What a way to keep accounts--all one knows at the end is that one's money is all spent. So you see I am trying to train Aleen to do things more intelligently."

Some other time I want to tell you some of this lady's ideas about tasks that do not come under ordinary household routine, through which a willing boy or girl could earn a bit extra for special purposes.

There's just about time now, I think, for a menu. The Menu Lady has given me one planned with children's needs in mind. And it's easy to prepare, too,-- that's always a consideration, isn't it?

The first item is a lamb stew, made according to the recipe in the leaflet, "Lamb As You Like It." Flaky boiled rice will be just the thing with this stew.

Eight ingredients, for Lamb Stew:

2 pounds lean raw lamb	1 green pepper, chopped
2 tablespoons butter	1 quart water
1/2 cup sliced onion	Flour, and
3 cups diced rutabaga turnip	Salt and pepper

Eight ingredients, for Lamb Stew: (Repeat)

Breast, shoulder, neck, flank, and trimmings are all good for lamb stew. Wipe the meat with a damp cloth, cut into small pieces, and roll in flour. Melt the butter in a skillet, add the onion, cook until it turns yellow, and add the meat. When the meat and onion have browned delicately, transfer them to a kettle, and add the water, after first pouring it into the skillet so as to get full benefit of the browned fat. Cover, and simmer for one hour. Then add the turnip, green pepper, and seasonings, and cook 20 minutes longer. If the stew is not thick enough, add 1 tablespoon of flour mixed with 2 tablespoons of cold water, and cook for several minutes longer, stirring constantly. Serve piping hot with browned potatoes and garnish with parsley.

Give the children shredded lettuce sandwiches with their stew, and have grapes or other fresh fruit for dessert.

Let's check the menu again: Lamb Stew; Flaky Boiled Rice; Shredded Lettuce Sandwiches; Grapes or other fresh fruit; and, of course, a glass of milk.

Thursday: "What Price Party Frocks?"



